

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6601

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 313

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USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0500

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JANUARY 20-26

REF: BEIRUT 0356 (DTG 201301Z JAN 78)

1. SUMMARY: THE LEBANESE FRONT MET IN ZGHARTA AND AGAIN ENDORSED "PLURALISM" FOR LEBANON. GOL OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED "SOME OPTIMISM" REGARDING PROSPECTS FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, BUT MUSLIM LEADERS CRITICIZED THE ZGHARTA MEETING.

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FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON CONTINUED, WITH INDICATIONS THE CHRISTIANS ARE TAKING A MORE AGGRESSIVE POSTURE. LEBANESE CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS TEMPORARILY PREVENTED WORKERS FROM CROSSING THE GOOD FENCE INTO ISRAEL. CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL WARNED AGAIN THAT SHIPLOADS OF ARMS WERE BEING DELIVERED TO TYRE FOR PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS. FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH WAS THE MOST RECENT LEBANESE LEADER TO VISIT DAMASCUS. A BOMB WENT OFF IN FRONT

OF THE PRO-LIBYAN PAPER AS-SAFIR. PARLIAMENT ON JANUARY 20 RAISED ITS MEMBERS' SALARIES 60 PERCENT AND ON JANUARY 25 APPROVED A BILL EXTENDING ITS TERM FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS. END SUMMARY.

2. LEBANESE FRONT MEETS. THE FOUR LEADERS OF THE LEBANESE FRONT - SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH, CAMILLE CHAMOUN, PIERRE GEMAYEL, AND FATHER SHARBIL QASIS - MET ON JANUARY 21 AND 22 IN ZGHARTA AND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE WHICH : (A) REAFFIRMED THE NEED TO RESPECT THE "PLURALISM OF THE LEBANESE COMMUNITY;" (B) CALLED THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON "AN OBSTACLE TO NATIONAL ACCORD WHICH MUST BE ELIMINATED;" AND (C) STATED THE FRONT'S (NEW) WILLINGNESS TO OPEN A DIALOGUE FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION "WITH ANY POLITICAL GROUP." THE FOUR LEADERS ALSO DREW UP AN ORGANIZATION CHARTER WHICH INSTITUTIONALIZED THEIR AUTHORITY OVER THE FRONT'S ACTIVITIES (SEPTTEL).

3. REACTION TO LEBANESE FRONT MEETING. PRESIDENT SARKIS MET WITH PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS ON JANUARY 25 TO DISCUSS THE ZGHARTA MEETING AND EXPRESSED "SOME OPTIMISM" REGARDING PROSPECTS FOR ARRIVING AT A FORMULA FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. MUSLIM LEADERS REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE ZGHARTA MEETING, HOWEVER. FORMER PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAM SAID THE ZGHARTA COMMUNIQUE DID "NOT INSPIRE SATISFACTION." ISLAMIC GROUPING SPOKESMAN SHAFIQ QAZZAN AFFIRMED THAT PLURALISM MEANT THE "PERPETUATION OF POLITICAL SECTARIANISM." PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER WALID JUMBLATT DESCRIBED THE ZGHARTA RESOLUTIONS AS "OLD THEORIES" WHICH "STRIKE  
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AT NATIONAL UNITY" (SEPTTEL).

4. FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON. FIGHTING CONTINUED IN THE SOUTH, WITH INDICATIONS THE CHRISTIANS ARE TAKING A MORE AGGRESSIVE POSTURE. CHRISTIAN FORCES IN AL QULAYAH AREA INITIATED TANK AND MORTAR FIRE ON PALESTINIANS IN KHIAM, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES. IN A SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT ACTION, CHRISTIAN FORCES FROM MARJAYUN ADVANCED ABOUT ONE KILOMETER NORTH TO AL BALAT, BUT WERE DRIVEN BACK BY PALESTINIANS THERE, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. ELSEWHERE, ACCORDING TO REUTERS, UNIDENTIFIED FIGHTERS TRIED TO TAKE A LEBANESE ARMED OUTPOST NEAR NABATIYAH ON JAN. 23, BUT WERE REPELLED.

5. GOOD FENCE ACTIVITIES. ACCORDING TO THE ISRAELI PRESS, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS IN LEBANON ON JANUARY 20 AND 22 PREVENTED LEBANESE WORKERS FROM CROSSING THE GOOD FENCE INTO ISRAEL. THE SOLDIERS APPARENTLY BELIEVED THE WORKERS WERE NOT ASSUMING A FAIR SHARE OF THEIR MILITARY BURDEN. ON JANUARY 23, HOWEVER, THE USUAL CROSSINGS RESUMED.

6. ARMS THROUGH TYRE. FORMER PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL IN SEPARATE STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS ON JANUARY 24 REPEATED WARNINGS THAT SHIPLOADS OF ARMS WERE BEING

DELIVERED TO TYRE FOR PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS. CHAMOUN NOTED THAT THE SHIPS "WERE NOT UNDER SOVIET PROTECTION," AND GEMAYEL SAID, "I WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THOSE VESSELS ARE UNDER ISRAELI PROTECTION." ON JANUARY 25 THE PHALANGE RADIO ASSERTED THAT TWO UNIDENTIFIED "DESTROYERS" HAD INTERCEPTED A SHIP CARRYING ARMS IN LEBANON'S TERRITORIAL WATERS AND PREVENTED IT FROM GOING TO TYRE. (COMMENT: SOME LEBANESE CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM LEADERS HAVE LONG CLAIMED THAT ISRAEL IS INTENTIONALLY ALLOWING THE DELIVERY OF ARMS BY SHIP TO TYRE.)

7. FRANJIYAH VISITS DAMASCUS. FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH MET WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL-ASAD IN DAMASCUS ON JAN. 24. FRANJIYAH ANNOUNCED AFTERWARDS THAT ASAD "WILL TURN HIS ATTENTION TO THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT" IN SOUTH  
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LEBANON, AS SOON AS "HE HAS SET HIS MIND AT EASE REGARDING THE SADAT INITIATIVE." MEANWHILE, THE 'IMAM MUSA SADR TOLD REPORTERS THAT ASAD WOULD BE MEETING WITH SEVERAL LEBANESE LEADERS OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TO FACILITATE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. (ASAD HAS SEEN LEBANESE BATH LEADER ASIM QANSU AND PHALANGE POLITBURO MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI IN RECENT DAYS. PIERRE GEMAYEL IS PLANNING TO VISIT DAMASCUS AROUND FEBRUARY 1.)

8. AN EXPLOSIVE CHARGE WAS THROWN FROM A MOVING CAR AT THE PRINTING HOUSE OF THE PRO-LIBYAN NEWSPAPER AS-SAFIR ON JAN. 24. THE CHARGE CAUSED SOME MATERIAL DAMAGE BUT NO CASUALTIES. IN REPORTING THE INCIDENT, AS-SAFIR NOTED THAT THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES WERE MANNING A CHECKPOINT ONLY 200 METERS FROM THE BUILDING.

9. PARLIAMENTARY ACTIONS. PARLIAMENT APPROVED A BILL ON JANUARY 20 RAISING ITS MEMBERS' SALARIES 60 PERCENT, AS WELL AS INCREASING VARIOUS ALLOWANCES FOR THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND SPEAKER BY 75 PERCENT AND FOR THE MINISTERS BY 60 PERCENT. ON JANUARY 25, PARLIAMENT APPROVED A BILL EXTENDING ITS TERM FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS UNTIL APRIL 1978. SPEAKER KAMAL AL-ASAD COMMENTED THAT THE MEASURE WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE ELECTIONS COULD NOT BE HELD UNDER THE PRESENT UNCERTAIN SECURITY SITUATION. THE PARLIAMENT WILL ENJOY FULL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY DURING THIS PERIOD, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT ASK TO RENEW ITS EMERGENCY POWERS TO GOVERN BY DECREE, WHICH EXPIRED IN DECEMBER, 1977.

10. TAPLINE RESUMES PUMPING. TAPLINE COMPLETED REPAIRS TO DAMAGED VALVES IN THE GOLAN SECTOR AND RESUMED PUMPING CRUDE TO ZAHRANI ON JANUARY 22.  
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## Message Attributes

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